

## Example Desired Conditions for Eastside Vegetation, Resilience, Fire, Wildlife and Invasive Plants on Forest Lands

### What this Document Is

These are example desired conditions like those that may be included in the National Forest (NF) Plan. Desired conditions (or goals) set forth the desired social, economic, and ecological goals of the NF. They attempt to paint a picture of what we (the public and the Forest Service) desire the forest to look like or the goods and services we desire it to provide. Desired conditions are generally expressed in broad, general terms; however, more specificity may be added to clarify the intent. Desired conditions are timeless in that there is no specific date by which they are to be completed. They may only be achievable over a long timeframe (e.g., several hundred years). In some cases, a desired condition matches the current condition, so the goal is to maintain the current condition. Desired conditions are the focus of this plan; management of the National Forest resources will be directed toward achieving the desired conditions. Desired conditions are the basis for the other plan components and describe the framework for future projects and activities. They are aspirations and not commitments or final decisions approving projects. Projects and site-specific activities must be consistent with desired conditions

### Integrated Vegetation, Resilience, Fire, Wildlife

- A full range of native species, development stages, habitats, and ecological processes occurs.
- ecological conditions sustain or enhance native species and support self-sustaining communities of native plants and animals
- Native plant communities dominate the landscape while invasive species are nonexistent or in low abundance and do not occur at levels that disrupt ecological functioning. Establishment of invasive plant species new to the NF is prevented.
- Landscapes are resilient and have an adaptive capacity to make terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems sustainable, resilient, and healthy under current and future conditions.
- The composition, density, structure, and mosaic of vegetation conditions reduce the threat of uncharacteristic wildfires to local communities and ecosystems.
- Potentially suitable habitat for Species of Conservation Concern helps maintain the distribution of those species.

### By vegetation type or habitat type

**Sagebrush:** Create and maintain a diversity of sagebrush age and cover classes on the landscape through the use of prescribed fire, prescribed natural fire, mechanical, biological, and/or chemical means to provide a variety of habitats and productivity conditions.

**Sage Grouse Habitat:** Quality suitable habitat for sage-grouse is distributed across the sagebrush landscape and allows populations to be maintained and expand.

**Eastside Pine (simple example):** Forests have a mosaic of trees with varying age classes and understory vegetation which provide habitat for a variety of species, including northern goshawks, and ground fuels conducive to low-severity fires.

**Jeffrey Pine (detailed example):** At the scale of the national forest as a whole, forest dominated by Jeffrey pine occupies more area than in 2003 and the trend is upward. At the landscape scale, the Jeffrey pine type is a highly heterogeneous mosaic of forest conditions composed of structural stages ranging from young to old trees. Forest appearance is variable but generally uneven-aged and open; areas of even-aged structure are rare. Where they are even identifiable, patch sizes are generally extremely small (0.01 to 0.5 acres), and the mixing of trees of different ages and sizes makes identification of stands or seral stages difficult. Forests are composed predominantly of vigorous trees, but dead and declining trees are a component and provide for snags and coarse woody debris (CWD). Stand basal areas range from 30 to 250 square feet per acre, with most stands falling below 100 square feet per acre.

**Desert Communities:** Erosion occurs at natural rates. There is little sign of compaction or accelerated erosion. Arroyos are stabilizing or recovering. Soils are friable and biologically diverse so plants form beneficial relationships with soil microbes. Roots are covered with soil and there is little evidence of plants perched above the soil with exposed roots (i.e. pedestalling). Biological soil crusts are present to improve nutrient cycling and stabilize soils, especially in sandier soils.

## **Beneficial Uses and Restoration**

- Pinyon-juniper: There are opportunities for collecting forest products (e.g. firewood, pinon nuts, and posts and poles) consistent with other desired conditions.
- Infrastructure (mills, vegetation processing, labor, roads) is readily available to allow for all means of vegetation restoration.
- Residents and visitors have ample opportunities to experience, appreciate, and learn about the forest's wildlife, fish, and plant resources.
- Domestic livestock grazing management maintains the desired composition, structure, and conditions of plant communities. Forage, browse, and cover needs of wildlife and authorized livestock should be managed in balance with available forage. Areas that are grazed have satisfactory soils, functional hydrology, and biotic integrity.
- Traditional ecological management strategies are considered in restoration projects.

## **Communities and Infrastructure and Fire (Wildland Urban Interface)**

- Fuel conditions across wildland landscapes pose low wildland fire risk to communities and infrastructure.
- Stands in defense zones are fairly open and dominated primarily by larger, fire tolerant trees. Surface and ladder fuel conditions are such that crown fire ignition is highly unlikely. The openness and discontinuity of crown fuels, both horizontally and vertically, result in very low probability of sustained crown fire.

- Fire management (wildlands, WUI and fire prevention) utilize an all lands, landscape approach (consistent with Cohesive Strategy and newest social science)
- Air quality on the Inyo National Forest meets State and Federal air quality standards including visibility and public health.
- Trade-offs between short-term, managed emissions that reduce long-term unmanaged emissions are incorporated into vegetation and fire management.
- Regional air emissions are coordinated amongst westside and eastside land managers.